

Appl. No. 10/692,966

Reply to Final Office action of January 27, 2005

REMARKS

In the January 27, 2005 Final Office Action, claims 1-11 (all of the pending claims) were rejected. This Response amends claim 1; after entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1-11 (11 total claims; 1 independent claim) remain pending in the application. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the above amendment and the following remarks.

As an initial matter, Applicant thanks Examiner Parsley for his participation in the telephonic interview with Applicant's representative Mark Takahashi on March 15, 2005. The above amendment to claim 1 comports with the proposed amendment discussed during the telephonic interview.

Claims 1-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Fauvel, USPN 5,129,306 ("Fauvel") or by Richards et al., USPN 5,585,596 ("Richards"). Claims 8-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Richards. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

Fauvel generally discloses a separation joint that, according to the Examiner's interpretation, includes a first male member 11, a second male member 5, and a two-piece female member 6/7 (best shown in Fauvel's FIG. 3). When assembled, the two-piece female member is attached to the two male members using two bolts. These two bolts function to hold the "flanges" of the female member to the respective male members, as clearly shown in Fauvel's FIG. 3. Upon detonation of the internal explosive, Fauvel's separation joint breaks apart at the two notches 15, thus allowing the two male members to separate from each other. The female members, although separated into four pieces, remain connected to the two male members.

Richards discloses a separation joint that, according to the Examiner's interpretation, includes a male member 16 and a female member 18 (see Richards' FIGS. 4A to 4D). As shown in FIG. 4A of Richards, the female member is inserted into the male member and breakable rivets or fasteners 26 are inserted through portions of the female member and into (or through) portions of the male member; the fasteners hold the male member inside of the female member. Upon detonation of the internal explosive, the fasteners shear or fracture such that the

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male member is released from the female member (see Richards' FIG. 4C and Column 9, Lines 1-9).

In contrast to both Fauvel and Richards, claim 1 (the only independent claim pending in this application) now recites "said female member being configured to clamp and hold said male member without any fastening mechanism holding said first flange and said second flange to said male member," and "said explosive device when detonated separates said male member from said female member without causing breakage of any component of the separation joint." Support for the first quoted limitation can be found in Applicant's specification at, e.g., paragraphs 0030 to 0033, and support for the second quoted limitation can be found in Applicant's specification at, e.g., paragraph 0028. No new matter has been presented. As discussed with Examiner Parsley during the March 15, 2005 interview, neither Fauvel nor Richards teaches these two limitations.

For at least the above reasons, neither Fauvel nor Richards anticipates the invention of claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant requests the withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 and claims 2-11 (which variously depend from claim 1) under 35 U.S.C. §102(b).

In conclusion, for the reasons given above, all claims now presently in the application are believed allowable. Should the Examiner have any questions or wish to further discuss this application, Applicant requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney at (480) 385-5060.

If for some reason Applicants have not requested a sufficient extension and/or have not paid a sufficient fee for this response and/or for the extension necessary to prevent abandonment on this application, please consider this as a request for an extension for the required time period and/or authorization to charge Deposit Account No. 50-2091 for any fee which may be due.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: March 24, 2005

By: 

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